

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.

**Rick Scott**

Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS

State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PENSACOLA, FL – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (DOH-Escambia) is celebrating 125 years of public health during 2014 with educational and commemorative events. The Florida Legislature created the State Board of Health on February 20, 1889, in response to a yellow fever epidemic in Jacksonville. At that time, Dr. Joseph Yates Porter from Key West became Florida's first State Public Health Officer. Yellow fever in Florida was eradicated in 1905.

"Florida's dramatic growth was made possible through public health efforts that controlled disease and improved environmental health," said Dr. John Armstrong, State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health. "Just as Dr. Porter and colleagues saved Floridians from yellow fever over a century ago, we are committed to solving the top public health threat to Florida families now: weight challenge."

The year-long celebration of 125 years of Florida Public Health was launched in Key West on February 3, where Dr. Armstrong joined Dr. Porter's great-great granddaughter in a ceremonial wreath laying at Dr. Porter's grave site. Locally, the Escambia County Board of Commissioners has recognized the milestone by issuing a proclamation on February 18, 2014.

Throughout 2014, the Florida Department of Health will offer educational and health information opportunities. A resource featuring "Public Health Heroes" from all 67 counties will be released later this spring. During the week of April 7-11, the Department will further highlight the 125th Anniversary as part of National Public Health Week. In September 2014, the Department will unveil a full historical exhibit of Florida Public Health heritage at Florida's Historic Capitol Museum in Tallahassee. DOH-Escambia's Fairfield Drive service center will feature a gallery-style poster display highlighting some of the major public health achievements of the last 125 years.

The Department invites Florida's residents and visitors to join in recognizing 125 years of protecting, promoting and improving the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. More information is available at www.FLHealth125.gov.

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Florida Department of Health

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